

a crossbow bolt in the back

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Additional Tags:	(tagging it as both bc while it's platonic it may feel weirdly shippy? take this as your reassurance that I am extremely aromantic. don't worry., they share a Profound Bond but its not romance just cause I don't like it in general , Dreams and Nightmares , Introspection , Character Study
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a crossbow bolt in the back

by [rabbit_with_a_sword](#)

Summary

I'll be back! Bdubs had declared, dead eyes bright under his bloodstained bandana, and Etho had thought he might be lying. Mostly trusted, of course. But thought it, because you didn't get far in this game with *blind* trust. Etho hadn't once considered he might've meant it, and yet still not come back.

... He didn't come back.

Modern au Etho gets the memories of Last Life, in the form of nightmares of how he felt when Bdubs died!

Notes

Ethubs angst.

(This is inspired by the My Last Life au by opera25 on tumblr and Do It Again by an anon on ao3 (it's the linked work) so go give them some love! This probably won't make much sense without them, although it's got good angst if you're just here for that)

- Inspired by [Do it Again](#) by Anonymous

The dreams come fast and true, overwhelming Etho with blurring images and half-remembered faces, Bdubs staring up at him angry after Etho startled him, Cleo looking down on him saying *well that's rude*, a crowd of Reds on the walls watching (bows in hand) while he fought a horrific Cerberus skeleton that dissolved whatever it touched and hated every living thing-

He readjusts his mask, trudging after the other Greens and Yellows. He doesn't look back at the hill over which Bdubs had vanished. *He's got his task, and then we can be friends again.* Following Ren down a dark narrow cave while still being on edge about the boogeyman is plenty stressful enough without worrying about Bdubs. He's competent. He's killed before, and he will again. And then Etho will rip one of the hearts the world gave him out and press it into Bdub's chest and they'll both be yellow and they can be on the same side again for one day longer before the end of things. All Etho wants is one more day.

(One more day, and then the day after that, and then the day after that, and then, and then, and then. There will never be enough days. Etho will always want one more.)

Everyone's comms ping at once. The group halts awkwardly, glancing around to see if the others agree it's time to stop.

[LDShadowLady fell from a high place]

"Was that Bdubs?" Ren asks. "Was that him fulfilling his vow?"

"We can't be sure," Scott counters to murmured agreement. "She might've just fell. You know how stressful it is to be a Red. Once you're dead you're dead."

[Bdoubleo100 was shot by Grian]

Etho feels like he's the one who got hit. A crossbow bolt of grief is lodged between his ribs, piercing his lungs, preventing any addition to the chorus of dismay rising around him, lamenting the hesitation all of them advised. The cursor blinks up at him accusingly. What can he even say? What can possibly encompass the promise he made and then broke because he hesitated for a second too long after seeing **LDShadowLady fell from a high place** and doomed Bdubs to the Void for keeping his word?

no, he sends, adding a plethora of extra O's to let the word cradle a little more of the pain inside. He glances at the other messages, a **D:** from Cleo and an **oof** from Ren next to **this is what happens if you betray Team Red** that he doesn't even need to see the username for.

I'll be back! Bdubs had declared, dead eyes bright under his bloodstained bandana. Etho had thought he might be lying. Mostly trusted, of course. But thought it. Etho hadn't once considered he might've meant it, and yet still not come back.

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Etho wakes up alone in an apartment he's supposed to share, blinking back the tears his dream-self didn't let himself cry, far more tired than when he went to sleep. That dream wasn't *anything* like the others! The world went from him and Bdubs laughing together to *Bdubs getting shot?*

... Calm. Calm down, Ethoslab. He forces himself to take a deep breath in, holding it for three seconds before breathing out. It's just his brain shoving the fact that Bdubs is gone (Bdubs is *gone*, gone, [*B'd oubt'ed 100 was s'hot b'y Gri'an*] gg buddy) and he's terrified that he might not be okay together with a random name they have lying around the apartment.

(For some reason, thinking of how Bdubs had laughed the first time he stole Grian's pins just makes him want to cry

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